

Contact: Matt Lloyd

HOUSE PASSES CLONING BAN

Washington, Feb 27, 2003 - WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Mike Pence today took to the House floor to speak out in favor of H.R. 534, the Human Cloning Prohibition Act of 2003 sponsored by Congressman David Weldon (R-FL). H.R. 534 passed the House of Representatives this evening by a vote of 241 to 155. Pence's speech on the House floor follows.

"I rise in strong and grateful support for the Human Cloning Prohibition Act and for the extraordinary efforts of my colleague, Dr. David Weldon, in conceiving of and promoting this bill over the last several years," said Pence.

"I also urge opposition to the substitute despite the fact that I know it is well intended and my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee with whom I serve, I know bring great passion and compassion to these issues.

"And I rise today not to demagogue an issue and not to vilify those who would differ with me, but to offer a gentle, but firm endorsement of a clean ban of human cloning in all of its permutations. Like virtually everyone in this institution and everyone in this debate, as the previous speaker just said, I oppose the idea of reproductive human cloning. We see it as deeply, morally offensive and objectionable, and so it is.

"But I would also offer, in a spirit of humility, that even that which is called therapeutic cloning, or the cloning only of nascent human life, for the purpose of experimentation is also deeply, morally problematic; and that we derive this from two basic principles from an understanding of the history of western civilization.

"That first principle is that which has distinguished western civilization, with very few exceptions, has been our belief in the sanctity of human life. In the uniqueness and preciousness of each and every individual human being. That's been something characteristic of western civilization.

"And it has caused the laws of this nation and the laws of every nation of western civilization since its Genesis of 3000 years ago to ever back slowly and respectfully away where human life is in question, where the depriving of human life is involved.

“And against that backdrop, not only does history teach us to back away from the awesome power of human life, but it also teaches us not to trust government power. That, in fact, the undeniable truth of history has been that time and time again, each time government had the power to intrude itself on human life, that it abused that power and often trampled on human beings and classes of human beings and races of human beings.

“It is against that spirit and against putting us on that slippery slope that I believe that Dr. Weldon has right prescription here. We should draw a strong line in the sand – a moral line – that says, as we look at human life, or even nascent human life, wherever one determines that life begins, that we should back slowly and humbly away.

“Ban human cloning for all of its purposes. Ban all development of human life for experimentation and destruction.

“As the Good Book says, ‘I set before life and blessing, death and destruction. Now choose life.’ And it is my hope and confidence that we would do that today,” said Pence.

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